

maize and beans into his two hands and K. helped him to throw them into the pot. As he did so K. and N. both said for him: 'This is the ritual of my grandmother.' Then Sijele gave him the water calabash and K. helped him to pour, while the same words were said for him again. Sijele did the same for K. and his brother in turn. She began each time by putting powder and beans and pouring water into the pot, and then K. followed suit, and his brother after him. For K. she said: 'This is the ritual of my mother,' and he repeated: 'This is the ritual of my mother, Sandumi'; for the brother she said: 'This is the death of my mother,' and he repeated the same words. 764

The ritual was interrupted once or twice by discussion. The child's hands got burnt in throwing the beans into the pot and there was a pause for comment and comfort. When Sijele said for the child: 'This is the ritual of my wife,' N. said: 'Let him say "of my grandmother".' Neither of the young men was very serious, and each laughed as he finished his words.

We went quietly (by pre-arrangement) to a neighbour's homestead, crouching in the darkness, and cut a stem of banana. We made a noise diving so that the householder stayed quiet. K's younger brother picked up the stem from the ground and ran off home with it, while the rest of us set up a hue and cry, following him at a run and calling: 'Thief, thief, he's stolen a banana stem!' Still the householder stayed quiet. This is the custom, the owners say nothing, it is the party of the 'thief' that pursues him. This stem, they told me, would be kept and used later.

So we entered the house again. Kalata had previously borrowed a harp (*lipanga*) of four strings and asked a neighbour to come and play in. The three principals, Sijele, and the player, stood up and began to circle round the fire slowly, stepping rhythmically and saying: 'Good-bye, go to father! Good-bye, go to mother!' Sijele and N. had previously told them the words and the tune. The fire burned up brightly and flickered on the circling figures, the leader crouching to his harp, while the beans steamed in the pot. Sijele held a winnowing basket full of dry pods of oil-seeds (*ipemba*) in her hands. The three principals reached into the basket as they circled and crushed them in their fingers till the seeds fell out. Then N. called out: 'Now then, stamp the stamping dance (*shakaya igaya*)!' The harp-player stopped playing while the three principals stamped and stamped near the fire calling the war-cry as they did so. No words were spoken. 534
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Two leaves were then placed on the ground, one sweet banana, one plantain, on top of each other. Sijele and the three principals knelt round them, and N. told them the words and the tune. Then these four beat the leaves as if they were hand drums, singing: 'The ritual of my father (*yala, yala*), the ritual of my mother: the ritual of Mwajigila, Mwilibuti, Malambalaga, Kisinile, Lambwe (these are the praise- 764
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533 names of their father); Senuhdi, Mwiliwa, Malohajigila (these are the
764 praise-names of their mother). The next day they explained their song:
"It is to perform the ritual (*siyalelele*). They call it *iyalele* (i.e. the
ritual) and they say that if they don't perform it the child will be like
an idiot, he will run about naked and mad." In all the songs *Sijele*
acted as leader and the principals as chorus.

Then, finally, a grain basket was brought and turned upside down.
Sijele and the principals beat on it with a new rhythm, but still syn-
crated, singing: "The two ways of the parent! The two ways of the
parent!" And so it finished.

764 I was told that the next morning early the three principals would eat
the beans which had now been cooked, but that they must stay for a
night first in the hut.

Kalata commenting later said: "We *Kukwa* circle and dance the
stamping dance, but we beat neither the ground nor the basket. Beat-
ing the basket is a *Sangu* custom." Kalata is a *Kukwa* but his mother
was a *Sangu*.¹ "We *Kukwa* sing farewell and "*Syela, gela*", and we
dance round to the harp; but we don't sing "the two ways of the
parent" at all!"

November 7

I arrived at 8 a.m. to find that the beans had been eaten. "We came
out in the morning cold very early, we washed our hands and ate the
beans. Then *Sijele*, who had slept the night with us, swept out the
rubbish (*iminda*) with the bunch of medicine twigs." When I arrived
Kalata was finishing the sweeping outside with an ordinary broom.

November 16

Reed of Mwilambi

764 They began by building a little hut on the pathway that goes through
342 the bananas to the stream, near the house. The path went right through
the hut, which was built only by the officiants, not by the others. After
they had finished building they planted hearth-bricks inside and lit a fire;
then, taking some dry oil-seeds and powdered medicine, they called out
to summon those for whom the ritual was being performed. When they
came into the hut the officiants gave powdered medicine and oil-seeds
to the child who received them in both hands and poured them into a
potsherd on the fire, saying as he did so: "This is the death of my grand-
mother." They gave them to the two young men likewise, who said:
"This is the death of my mother" (that is to say: "This is the ritual of my
mother"). And then the officiant took all the rest of the oil-seeds and
put them in the potsherd to roast.

764 When the seeds were roasted the officiant ground them up and began
to prepare ointment. Meanwhile the principals poured water into a

¹ Strictly the ritual should have been *Kukwa* since a wife follows the ritual of her
husband.

⁷⁹⁷ The festivities and display are most often linked, not to the Church ritual, but to the handing over of marriage cattle. Since ⁷⁹⁵ the frame of the puberty ritual are not celebrated, the Christians concentrate their energies on the *shukwa*, when quantities of food are provided by the bride's family, and a crowd gathers to sing and dance. Then, some time after the cattle have been handed over, the bride is taken to her husband by a party of 'mothers' and friends, and a feast is provided by the groom. The pattern is very similar to that of the pagan handing over of marriage cattle (585) (*shukwa*) and bringing home the bride (*shukwa*), but new songs and dances replace the somewhat homely pagan ones, and the Christian youths, unlike the pagans, dance without spears. Often at a Christian wedding pagans also attend, and there are rival groups of dancers, pagans, and Christians, between whom quarrels readily flare up. And when the new songs and dances of the Christians are copied by the pagans, as they sometimes are, then the Christians drop them, for they wish to be different.

The traditional examination of the bride by the 'mothers' and the giving of a bull if she goes to her husband a virgin, are maintained in the Christian community. The bull is usually killed as a feast for the mothers 'to say thank you for nourishing her', but there is, of course, no offering of the sacred meat to the ancestors, and sometimes the bull is not killed at all, or the groom brings shillings instead. As so often happens, a former ritual survives as ceremonial, an observance fit to be specially appropriate to the occasion, but no longer regarded as a condition of health or salvation.

[183] When she is taken to her husband the bride is exhorted by her 'mothers' on her duties as a married woman. The traditional emphasis on separation from her mother is still there: 'You have left your mother, your husband is your mother, we have separated. . . . ' And she is exhorted to be chaste, to obey her husband and answer him submissively, to be clean and diligent in her work, to be hospitable, and above all, as a Christian, to feed 'those from a distance'. Here the contrast between pagan and Christian ethics is emphasized: a pagan wife is only obliged to cook for kinsmen and neighbours, not strangers, but for a Christian to let a stranger starve is spoken of as a mortal sin.

^x ⁷⁹⁷ The annual festivals of the Church are not so closely parallel to ⁷⁹⁵ pagan communal rituals, for they were developed in a northern and temperate climate with a rhythm very different from the ⁷⁹⁶

PAGAN AND CHRISTIAN

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Christians in Ngande (e.g. *amungwa*) have been banned by the Kirk Synodism. The European-style dances, such as are sometimes organised by the educated men in centres like Karanga or Tukaya, are not attended by these men's wives: respectable women avoid them. While we lived near Karanga mission there was much discussion among the villagers over what recreations were permissible, and hot arguments between those who wished to permit beer drinking and dancing to Christians and those who wished to ban both. It is the Nyakyusa elders who are most partisan in their views—much more so than many of the missionaries who are very conscious of the need for recreation; indeed, the Livingstonia Presbytery once instructed all its Synods to look into the matter. The chief outlet for young Christians is in ballads. A good singer is much admired and the composer may even sell his songs, with words and music written out. One of the former missionaries is honoured as the man who first taught the Nyakyusa to read music as well as to sing by ear.

In pagan thought moral obligations are limited to kinsmen and neighbours: they do not extend beyond the chiefdom except to those relatives who may live beyond its bounds. As we have shown, the common moral sanctions are the anger of senior relatives, and 'the breath of men', and these operate only within the lineage and age-village. But Christians have read the parable of the Good Samaritan and taken it to heart. Sermons stress this: 'If a Kinga comes and asks for a place to sleep the night and you refuse you are among the goats.' 'If a traveller from the coast asks for a place to sleep and you refuse, do you show love?' 'We tell a bride she should be hospitable to her neighbours if she can, but she must cook for those from a distance.' It is one of the points on which the Christians are most conscious of a difference between themselves and the pagans. And the exclusiveness of Europeans is one of the reasons why they are distinguished from Christians in the song on the title page of *Rinidi of Kinship*. 'If all Europeans made friends with us (*akungwa*) like X and Y, we were told, 'the whole country would have been Christian long ago.'

Linked with the concern for strangers is the obligation to preach the Gospel to others—something constantly stressed in sermons, and finding expression both in preaching in the surrounding villages and in tours of more remote areas, often areas of another language. Such tours implied hardship in travelling and a